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## TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

SAN DIEGO SOCIETY OF NATURAL HISTORY

VOLUME IX, No. 14, pp. 67-68

DECEMBER 8, 1939

A NEW SUBSPECIES OF THE WESTERN  
WORM SNAKE

BY

LAURENCE M. KLAUBER

*Curator of Reptiles and Amphibians, San Diego Society of Natural History*

Lately, in surveying the differential characters of the worm snakes of the genus *Leptotyphlops*, I have found the number of longitudinal scale rows around the tail to constitute a character of value in separating some closely related forms. It is a character of easy and accurate determination, since the rows are constant in number from a point just posterior to the vent almost to the terminal cone. There seems to be no sexual or other variation within homogeneous series; thus 52 specimens of *L. humilis humilis* from western San Diego County, California, without exception have 12 rows; and 103 specimens of *L. dulcis* from Texas, all have 10 rows. Only in one locality, evidently an area of intergradation between two subspecies, have I found any variation in this character.

Upon the basis of this character I find that the worm snakes without supraoculars, in western Texas and northern Coahuila, differ from the subspecies further west, and I therefore describe the eastern subspecies as

***Leptotyphlops humilis segregus* subsp. nov.**

*Type*.—No. 103670 in the collection of the United States National Museum. Collected on Chalk Draw, Brewster County, Texas, August 11, 1936, by T. F. Smith.

*Diagnosis*.—A worm snake of the species *Leptotyphlops humilis*, but differing from the other subspecies in having 10 scale rows around the tail instead of 12.

*Description of the Type*.—Length over-all 313 mm.; length of tail 14 mm.; ratio of total length to tail length 22.4. Diameter of body  $6\frac{1}{2}$  mm.; ratio of body length to diameter 48.

The body is almost cylindrical, the head being only slightly distinct. The tail is somewhat reduced in diameter and terminates in a sharp spine.

The head is moderately depressed, with a prominent, rounded overhanging

snout; viewed from above it is wedge-shaped. The rostral is curved from the underside of the upper jaw over the snout, reaching back nearly as far as the front of the eye; the posterior tip is rounded. The supraocular series comprises, on each side, an inferior nasal, a single anterior supralabial, an ocular, and a posterior supralabial. The nasals are divided, the upper part being somewhat wider than the widest part of the ocular. The inferior nasal is much smaller than the upper; the nasal suture rises upward toward the rostral. The superior nasals are prevented from meeting on the mid-dorsal line by the contact between the rostral and prefrontal. The anterior supralabial is small and is higher than wide; it is of the same width as the inferior nasal. The ocular is large and reaches the lip. The eye is above the top of the anterior supralabial and is located toward the front of the ocular. The posterior supralabial is as wide as high; it narrows toward the top. There are no supraoculars. Of the mid-dorsal series the frontal is slightly smaller than either the prefrontal or interparietal. The parietals are large, three times as high as wide, and contact the posterior supralabials. The occipitals are also large; they are prevented from contacting the posterior supralabials by a temporal on each side. The mental is small and triangular. There are three infra-labials on each side, the posterior being enlarged and hidden by the overhanging upper jaw. The chin-shields are small and regular, and enlarge posteriorly.

The body is covered with 14 rows of smooth and imbricate scales of uniform size, neither the mid-dorsal nor mid-ventral being conspicuously enlarged, except that the mid-dorsals are somewhat expanded on the neck. There are 10 rows around the tail, two rows being dropped 3 scales anterior to the anal plate, and two at the base of the tail. The anal is entire and somewhat pointed. The median dorsal series from prefrontal to tail spine numbers 275, the subcaudals 15.

The 7 dorsal scale rows (in alcohol) are brown, the color being applied with punctations; the edges of the scales are a trifle lighter than the centers. The ventral color is somewhat lighter, the 7 mid-ventral rows being cream. The top of the head is also brown. The posterior supralabials and the temporals are light. The rostral and the sides of the head, as far back as the posterior supralabials, temporals, and the lower edges of the parietals are dotted with tiny pores.

*Remarks.*—In addition to the type, four other specimens from Texas and two from Coahuila have been available. They are similar to the type in all essential characters. No specimen available from these areas has other than 10 tail rows. In southeastern Arizona specimens occur with either 10 or 12 rows. This area is deemed one of intergradation with *humilis humilis*. From central Arizona to the Pacific Coast and south into Sinaloa and Lower California, 12 rows are universal. The relationship between *segregus* and the other *humilis* subspecies will be discussed more completely in a paper now in preparation.

This character will probably prove useful in other *Leptotyphlops* groups. For example, amongst 52 specimens of the *albifrons* group from Central and South America, only 5 specimens — 4 from Bolivia and one from extreme south-eastern Peru — have 12 scale rows around the tail; all others have 10. But whether this is a valid species or subspecies must await the checking of the type specimen of *Leptotyphlops undecimstriatus* Schlegel, 1844, if it be still available in the Paris Museum. Under present European conditions this is impossible.